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## ABSTRACT

16        In accordance with the present invention, a NSP, such as Incumbent Local Exchange  
17      Carrier (ILEC) or a Competitive Local Exchange Carrier (CLEC) can own and operate a  
18      Value-Added Service (VAS) Gateway . By means of this gateway, the NSP provides its  
19      subscribers and customers a unified access interface mechanism for them to access many  
20     NSP (or third-party provider) services. According to the invention, the VAS Gateway  
21     provides the first-stage of the subscriber's interaction capability with the NSP's domain via  
22     a unified user interface for all of the subscriber's on-line information access, data  
23     communications, service management, and vertical (value-added) services. For example,  
24     the VAS Gateway presents the subscriber with an interactive menu helping the subscriber to  
25     select an ISP, transport service or access to his/her corporate network server.

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